

Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington —An Update—

Background The 1994 Washington State Legislature directed the Washington State Institute for Public Policy to evaluate the costs and benefits of criminal justice policies, violence prevention programs, and other strategies to decrease the rate of “at-risk” youth.¹ The goal of the 1994 legislation was to achieve measurable, cost-effective reductions in eight specific outcomes:

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|-------------------------|--|
| 1. Violent crime | 5. Dropping out of school |
| 2. Teen substance abuse | 6. Child abuse or neglect |
| 3. Teen pregnancy | 7. Domestic violence |
| 4. Teen suicide | 8. State-funded out-of-home placements |

The legislation expanded the category of juveniles subject to adult prosecution and increased certain penalties for crimes committed with a firearm. The Legislature also directed state agencies and local communities to take a “public health” approach in reducing the incidence of these eight outcomes. In particular, the Legislature wanted to reduce those “risk factors”—and increase those “protective factors”—that are “empirically linked” to youth violence and the rate of at-risk youth.²

The legislation instructed local communities, as opposed to state agencies, to take a larger role in planning and implementing prevention strategies. To accomplish this goal, the Legislature created a new entity—Community Public Health and Safety Networks. Working with the Family Policy Council at the state level, the Community Networks were directed to establish plans for their local areas and, potentially, to implement the plans through coordination of publicly-funded prevention programs in their jurisdictions.

Part of the Institute’s assignment from the Legislature is to evaluate the Community Public Health and Safety Networks. This report does **not** evaluate whether the 1994 legislation is achieving its goals—it is too early to make that assessment. During 1997-98, the Institute will work with the Department of Health to refine Network-level indicators for the statewide trends discussed in this report. The data will include measurable risk and protective factors at the Community Network level.

Update of Statewide Trends This report updates trends in statewide statistical indicators for the eight outcomes identified in the legislation.³ These data help establish part of the long-run, baseline information necessary to assess statewide progress in achieving the legislation’s overall goals. Tables at the end of the report show the data for each year. For more information, contact Mason Burley or Steve Aos at (360) 866-6000, ext. 6380.

¹ RCW 70.190.050.

² RCW 43.70.550.

³ In 1996, the Institute published a more comprehensive report describing the 1994 legislation and statewide trends in the rate of at-risk youth. See *Trends in At-Risk Behaviors of Youth in Washington*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, January 1996.

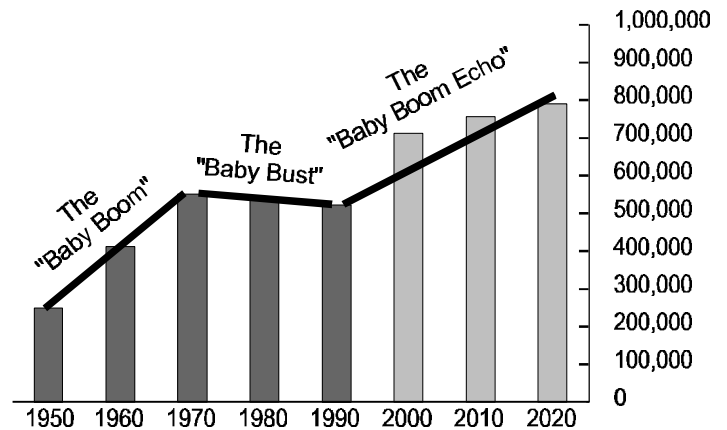
Washington's 10- to 17-Year-Old Population Continues to Grow

In its latest forecast, the Office of Financial Management (OFM) anticipates continued growth in the total *number* of 10- to 17-year-olds in Washington. In the next ten years, the size of the youth population is projected to increase by over 125,000—from 646,280 in 1996 to 772,903 in 2005, a 20 percent increase.

Figure 1 shows how the 10- to 17-year-old population changed between 1950 and 1990, and the growth OFM expects in the years ahead. The original post-World War II “Baby Boom” was followed by the “Baby Bust” during the 1970s and 1980s. The current growth period, which reflects the “Baby Boom Echo,” began in 1989.

Figure 1
Washington's 10- to 17-Year-Old Population

Census Data: 1950 to 1990, OFM Forecast: 2000 to 2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

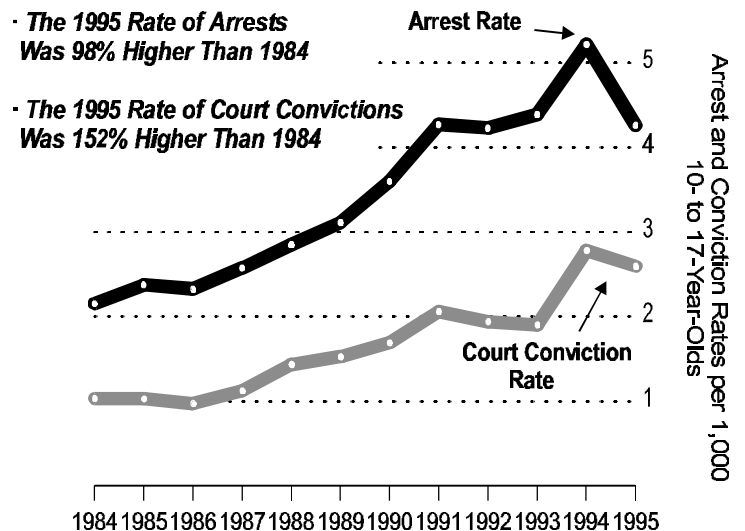
The Rate of Juvenile Violence Declined in 1995, But Remains High

There are two sources for tracking trends in juvenile violence in Washington: the courts and the police. Both sources indicate that the rate of juvenile violence in Washington decreased in 1995, but remains high by historical standards. Figure 2 displays arrest and conviction rates for juvenile violent crime through 1995, the most recent year for which data are available.

The rate of juvenile *arrests* for violent felonies nearly doubled between 1984 and 1995; from 2.16 arrests per thousand youth 10 to 17 years old in 1984, to 4.26 per thousand in 1995.

The rate of juvenile *convictions* for violent crimes was 152 percent higher in 1995 than it was in 1984; from 1.03 convictions per thousand youth in 1984, to 2.59 per thousand in 1995.

Figure 2
Trends in Rates of Juvenile Violence in Washington State: 1984 to 1995



Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Office of the Administrator for the Courts, Office of Financial Management, and the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

Violent offenses include those defined by the FBI: murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

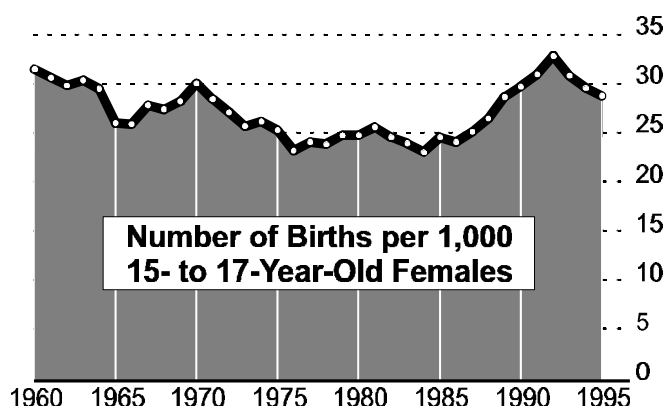
Teenage Birthrates Fell From 1993 to 1995, But the Percentage of Births to Non-Married Females Increased

After increasing between 1987 and 1992, the birthrate for all teenage women in Washington State has fallen since 1993. Figure 3 shows the long-term trend in the number of births per thousand 15- to 17-year-old females.

In 1960, 31.5 per thousand females age 15 to 17 gave birth in Washington State. The birthrate in 1995 was slightly lower at 28.8 births per thousand females in that age group.

In 1995, a total of 3,121 children were born to mothers between the ages of 15 and 17 in Washington State (an average of 8.5 births per day).

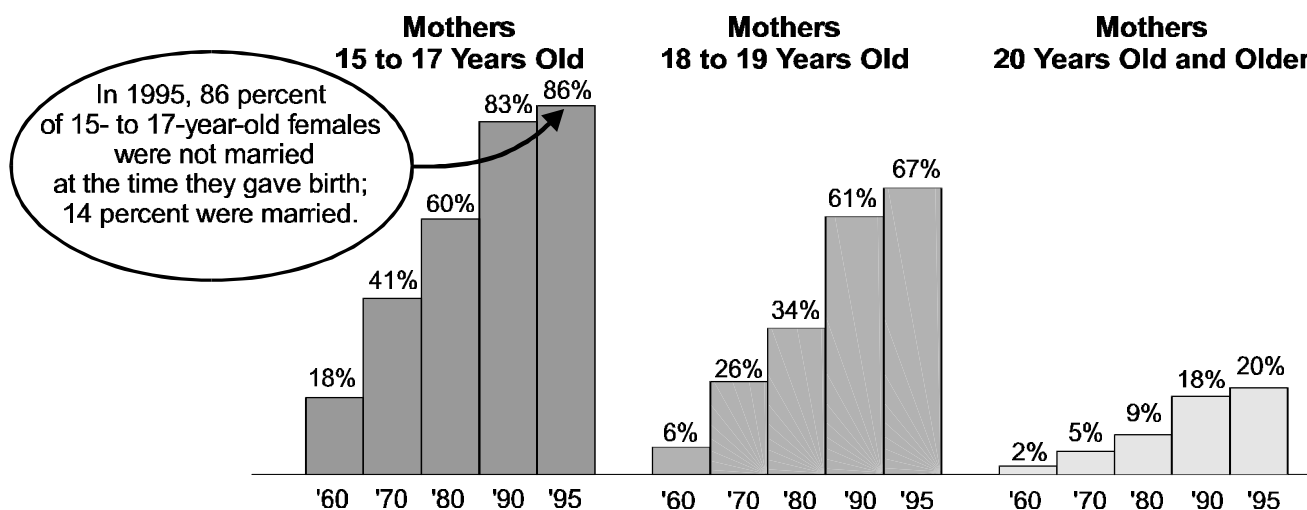
Figure 3
Teen Birthrates in Washington:
1960 to 1995



Source: Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Office of Financial Management, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

Over the past 35 years, the percentage of women who were not married at the time of giving birth has increased substantially. Figure 4 illustrates changes in the marital status of females giving birth in Washington State. Of **females age 15 to 17** giving birth in 1960, 18 percent were not married; by 1995, 86 percent were not married. Among **females age 18 to 19**, and **age 20 and over**, the percentage not married at the time of giving birth has also increased. In 1995, two-thirds of 18- to 19-year-old mothers were not married when they gave birth to their child.

Figure 4
Percentage of Births to Non-Married Females,
By the Age of the Mother: 1960 to 1995



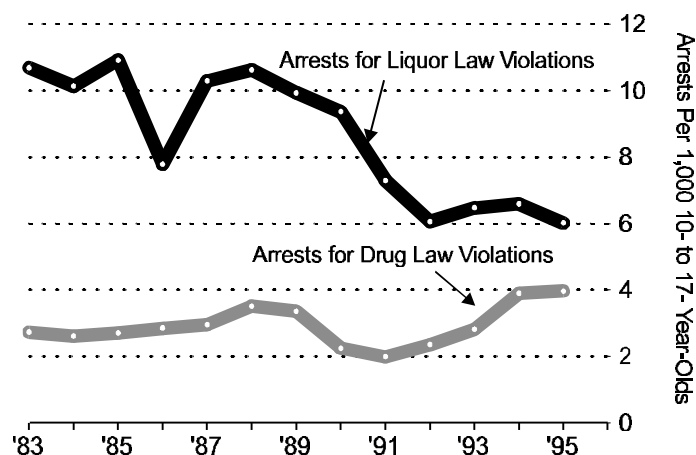
Source: Washington State Department of Health. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

Juvenile Substance Abuse Arrest Rates: Drug Law Violations Up, Liquor Law Violations Down

Figure 5 shows the number of arrests per thousand youth in Washington for two categories of substance abuse: liquor law violations and drug law violations.

The juvenile arrest rate for liquor law violations declined from 10.7 arrests per thousand juveniles 10 to 17 years old in 1983, to 6.0 arrests per thousand juveniles in 1995—a 44 percent reduction. The arrest rate for drug law violations rose between 1983 and 1995. Since 1991, in particular, the arrest rate for drug law violations increased from 2.0 arrests per thousand juveniles to 4.0 arrests per thousand in 1995—a 100 percent increase.

Figure 5
Arrest Rates for Juvenile Substance Abuse Violations in Washington, 1983 to 1995



Source: Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, Office of Financial Management. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

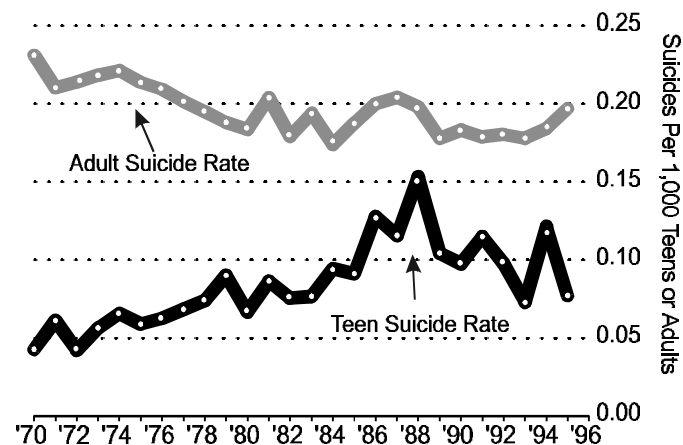
Teenage Suicide Rates Not Increasing

There were 40 teenage deaths recorded as suicides in Washington in 1995, down from 69 in the peak year of 1988.

Figure 6 plots suicide rates in Washington State for teens and adults. The teen suicide rate increased from 0.04 suicides per thousand teenagers in 1970 to 0.08 suicides per thousand in 1995.⁴ The small *number* of teenage suicides produces more erratic *trends* in the rate of teenage suicides.

The adult suicide rate declined moderately during the past 25 years. About 0.19 per thousand adults (age 20 and over) committed suicide in 1995. There were 754 adult deaths reported as suicides in 1995.

Figure 6
Teenage and Adult Suicide Rates 1970 to 1995



Source: Washington State Department of Health. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

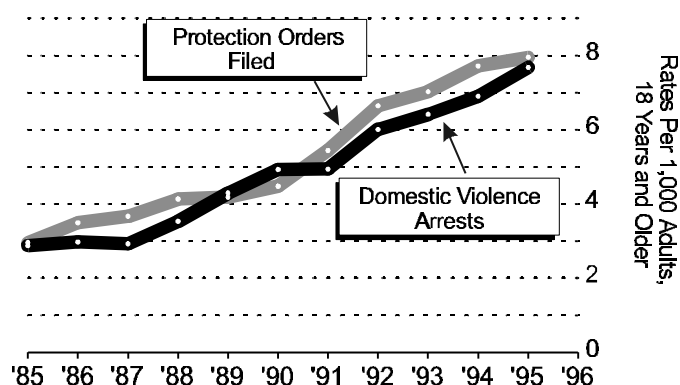
⁴ Suicide rates are commonly reported as number of suicides per 100,000 individuals. (For example, 8 per 100,000 teenagers committed suicide in Washington in 1995.) This report expresses the number of suicides per 1,000 individuals so that suicide rates can be compared directly to the other at-risk outcomes described in this report.

Domestic Violence: Police Arrests and Court Filings Continue to Rise

Figure 7 plots the rate of domestic violence arrests and court protection orders filed since 1985. The Washington State Patrol reported that in 1995, 30,460 individuals were arrested for incidents of domestic violence (7.68 arrests per every thousand adults). In the same year, 31,543 domestic violence protection orders were filed in Washington's courts (7.95 per every thousand adults).

Long-term trends in this data should be viewed with caution; during the 1980s and 1990s, increased public awareness of domestic violence may have affected the willingness of individuals to report domestic violence incidents or to seek protection orders. Thus, the actual incidence rate may not have risen.

Figure 7
Domestic Violence Protection Orders and Arrests in Washington: 1985 to 1995



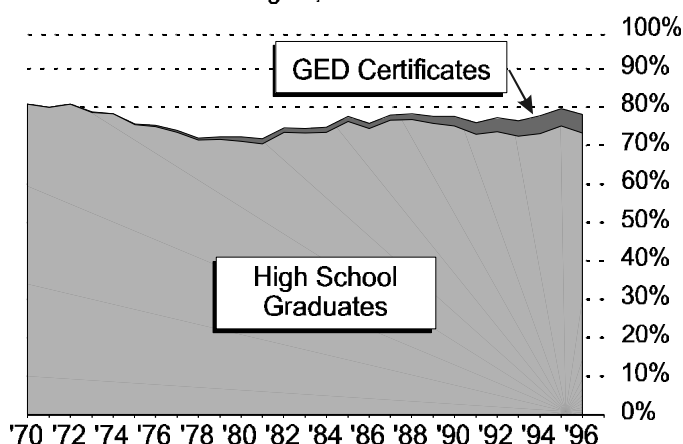
Source: Washington State Patrol, Office of the Administrator for the Courts, Washington State Office of Financial Management. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

“On-Time” High School Graduation Rates Remain Steady

Changes in the definition and reporting of school dropouts make it difficult to report trends in the dropout rate over time. One useful measure of the number of youth staying in school, however, is the “on-time” graduation rate. Figure 8 shows the number of public and private high school graduates as a percentage of 17- to 18-year-olds in Washington State from 1970 to 1996. Also shown on the chart are the percentage of students (age 18 and under) who earned their General Educational Development (GED) certificate, rather than a high school diploma.

In 1996, 73 percent of youth age 17 to 18 in Washington State had completed their high school diploma, with an additional 5 percent obtaining a GED. The high school completion rate has remained fairly stable in the last 25 years, although the proportion of youth electing to earn a GED certificate has increased.

Figure 8
High School Graduates and GED Certificates Issued
as a Percent of the 17- to 18-Year-Old Population
in Washington, 1970 to 1996

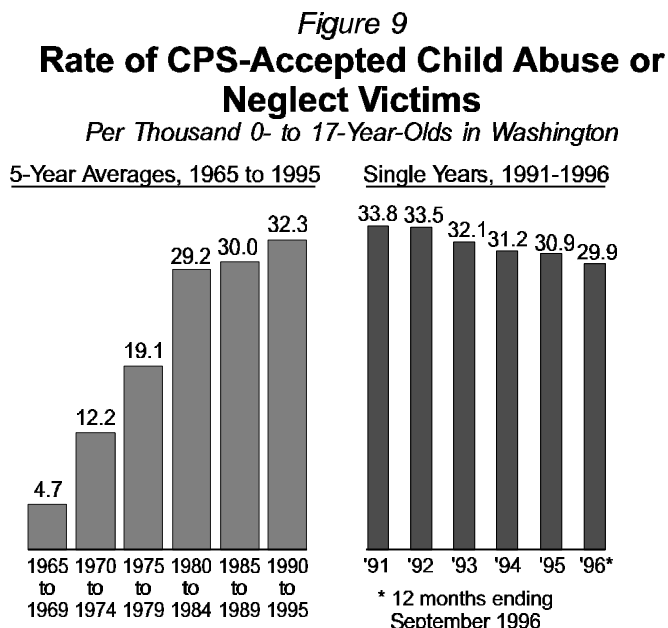


Source: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of Financial Management. Calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

Child Abuse: Recent Decline Seen in the Rate of Cases Accepted by CPS

Washington's Child Protective Services (CPS) provides emergency intervention and treatment for children found to be at risk of child abuse. The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) records the number of child abuse cases *referred* to CPS, and the cases that CPS *accepted* after determining a need for services. Figure 9 shows unduplicated counts of the number of child abuse or neglect victims *accepted* by CPS per thousand children age 17 and under.

In 1991, DSHS implemented a new system for recording information on CPS cases. After adjusting for duplicated cases, the most recent data show that the rate of child abuse victims *accepted* by CPS declined between 1991 and 1996.

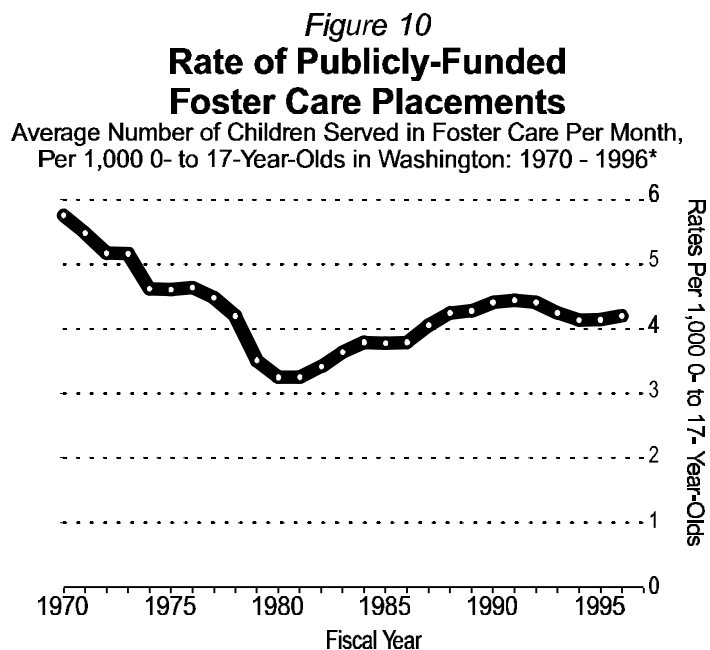


Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Office of Financial Management. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

State-Funded Foster Care: Rate of Placements Has Decreased

DSHS oversees placements for the state-funded family foster care program. DSHS describes the foster care program as providing "services to children who need short-term or temporary protection because they are dependent, abused, neglected, and/or cannot live with their parents because of conditions which threaten their normal development."

In 1996, the average number of children per month on the family foster care caseload was 6,251. During an average month in 1996, 4.2 out of every 1,000 children in Washington (age 0 to 17) were in the family foster care program. The rate of foster care placements decreased sharply between 1970 and 1980, increased in the 1980s, and has declined slightly in the 1990s.



Source: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State Office of Financial Management. All calculations made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

* 1996 figure reflects 12 month period, ending October, 1996.

Table 1a: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

	Population		Juvenile Violent Crime: Age 10-17		Birthrate: Age 15-17			Birthrate: Age 18-19		
	Total ^b	Age 10-17 ^b	Total Arrests (adjusted) ⁶	Court Convictions ⁷	Female Population, Age 15-17 ⁸	Total Births ⁹	Total Births, Single Women ⁹	Female Population Age 18-19 ⁸	Total Births ⁹	Total Births, Single Women ⁹
1950	-	248,225	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1960	2,853,214	411,580	-	-	67,423	2,124	385	36,426	6,965	450
1970	3,413,244	551,996	-	-	98,925	2,975	1,227	62,432	6,868	1,500
1980	4,132,156	537,226	-	-	104,933	2,605	1,560	74,758	5,779	1,982
1981	4,229,278	538,878	-	-	101,440	2,603	1,623	73,403	5,619	2,022
1982	4,276,549	527,198	-	-	96,954	2,392	1,561	72,559	5,277	1,974
1983	4,307,247	514,829	-	-	93,750	2,254	1,588	69,590	5,038	2,120
1984	4,354,067	506,925	1,092	522	94,258	2,181	1,603	65,923	4,883	2,206
1985	4,415,785	504,233	1,199	516	97,145	2,394	1,765	63,354	4,724	2,318
1986	4,462,212	500,826	1,164	487	100,209	2,421	1,875	62,556	4,725	2,478
1987	4,527,098	498,628	1,284	560	98,318	2,476	1,987	64,036	4,748	2,585
1988	4,616,886	497,631	1,419	713	94,482	2,505	2,016	67,349	5,058	2,992
1989	4,728,077	500,575	1,558	763	89,254	2,562	2,105	70,160	5,406	3,274
1990	4,866,692	522,612	1,880	883	90,090	2,682	2,218	67,359	5,732	3,468
1991	5,000,400	545,411	2,329	1,122	91,569	2,838	2,355	62,786	5,512	3,446
1992	5,116,700	564,985	2,390	1,094	94,969	3,124	2,591	61,445	5,377	3,456
1993	5,240,900	588,526	2,585	1,118	98,787	3,048	2,616	61,876	5,533	3,646
1994	5,334,400	607,705	3,172	1,689	102,665	3,042	2,631	63,841	5,419	3,575
1995	5,429,900	627,229	2,673	1,627	108,290	3,121	2,699	65,867	5,578	3,746
2000	5,928,936	713,576	-	-	125,921	-	-	81,046	-	-
2010	6,800,037	755,594	-	-	142,572	-	-	100,478	-	-
2020	7,702,092	790,199	-	-	141,123	-	-	93,170	-	-

Table 1b: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

	Juvenile Substance Abuse Arrests Age 10-17			Number of Suicides		Domestic Violence Orders and Arrests		High School Graduation and Completion		
	Drug Law Violations ¹⁰	Liquor Law Violations ¹⁰	DUI (driving under the influence) Violations: ¹⁰	Total ⁹ (all ages)	Teenage Suicides (age 13-19) ⁹	Protection Orders Filed ¹¹	Arrests ¹²	Public School ¹³	Private School (estimate) ⁸	GED's issued (age 18 and under) ¹⁴
1950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1960	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1970	-	-	-	511	20	-	-	50,425	2,787	14
1980	-	-	-	554	33	-	-	50,402	2,526	752
1981	-	-	-	639	42	-	-	49,912	2,592	885
1982	-	-	-	570	36	-	-	49,971	2,624	912
1983	1,404	5,503	433	621	36	-	-	46,667	2,779	718
1984	1,323	5,138	401	577	44	-	-	44,606	2,821	883
1985	1,363	5,505	369	627	42	9,612	9,350	45,798	2,937	866
1986	1,428	3,897	455	690	58	11,475	9,771	45,805	2,825	896
1987	1,475	5,129	421	708	52	12,255	9,794	46,769	2,807	873
1988	1,746	5,289	435	718	69	14,119	12,058	49,858	2,762	1,102
1989	1,680	4,970	389	645	47	14,648	15,040	48,911	2,652	1,333
1990	1,172	4,895	388	678	44	16,120	17,751	45,203	2,331	1,614
1991	1,087	3,978	308	688	52	20,068	18,216	43,474	2,229	1,995
1992	1,330	3,421	308	700	45	24,957	22,578	44,381	2,303	2,274
1993	1,656	3,809	261	695	35	26,975	24,622	45,175	2,312	2,660
1994	2,365	4,004	328	755	61	30,099	26,927	46,985	2,423	3,132
1995	2,483	3,773	358	794	40	31,543	30,460	49,944	2,671	3,209
1996	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50,408	2,760	3,514
2000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2010	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2020	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 1c: Washington State At-Risk Youth Statistical Indicators

	Population ⁸	Child Abuse and Neglect Data ¹⁵		Family Foster Care ¹⁶
	Age 0-17	Estimated Unduplicated Openings (SSPS)	Accepted Victims, Unduplicated Count (CAMIS)	Average Number of Children per Month on the Family Foster Care Caseload
1950	-	-	-	-
1960	-	-	-	-
1970	1,161,915	9,903	-	6,690
1980	1,139,360	30,545	-	3,701
1981	1,151,139	33,753	-	3,747
1982	1,149,400	34,638	-	3,925
1983	1,146,704	33,665	-	4,173
1984	1,152,315	35,063	-	4,368
1985	1,164,801	33,417	-	4,396
1986	1,173,262	35,415	-	4,445
1987	1,183,820	27,517	-	4,800
1988	1,200,545	34,837	-	5,097
1989	1,224,337	47,485	-	5,233
1990	1,267,608	<i>DSHS implemented new data system</i>		5,588
1991	1,315,346	-	44,386 (a)	5,843
1992	1,358,846	-	45,521 (a)	5,991
1993	1,403,340	-	45,022	5,956
1994	1,434,431	-	44,727	5,932
1995	1,463,859	-	45,206	6,062
1996	1,487,813	-	44,425*	6,251*
2000	1,576,278	-	-	-
2010	1,652,013	-	-	-
2020	1,833,740	-	-	-

Washington State Institute for Public Policy, February 1997.

* 12 months ending Sept. 1996

⁵ U.S. Bureau of Census, Washington State Office of Financial Management.

⁶ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, adjusted to correct classification and reporting differences which occurred between 1984 and 1995. All adjustments performed by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Violent offenses are defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. For more information, see *The Rate of Juvenile Violence in Washington State Declined in 1995, but Remains High*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, October 1996.

⁷ Office of the Administrator for the Courts. Violent offenses are those defined by the FBI to include murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault.

⁸ Washington State Office of Financial Management.

⁹ Center for Health Statistics, Washington State Department of Health.

¹⁰ Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, with adjustments made by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

¹¹ Office of the Administrator for the Courts.

¹² Washington State Patrol.

¹³ Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State.

¹⁴ Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

¹⁵ SSPS is the original data system used by DSHS to track child abuse cases. The unduplicated case number is derived using known duplication rates in the current data system. In 1990, DSHS implemented the Case and Management Information System (CAMIS) to keep records on reported and accepted child abuse cases. Since only referrals were recorded in 1991 and 1992, figures indicated with an (a) are derived from the average ratio of referred to accepted cases from 1993-1995. Data from 1996 are from a 12 month period, ending September 1996. For more information, see *Child Abuse or Neglect Trends in Washington State*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, July 1996.

¹⁶ Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. Data from 1996 are from a 12 month period, ending October 1996. For more information, see *Trends in State-Funded Out-of-Home Placements of Youth in Washington State*, Washington State Institute for Public Policy, July 1996.